

INTERNET ADDICTION, LONELINESS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG THE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to study the relationship of internet addiction with the loneliness and the Academic Performance of the secondary school students. The sample comprised 200 students (100 each from Government and Private) selected randomly from the 4 Government and 4 private schools of Shimla city using the scientific method of selection. Internet Addiction Inventory and Loneliness scale was used to observe the internet addiction and loneliness of the participants. While the scores obtained by the participants in their 10th class board examination of their respective Board were taken as the academic performance of the participants and the result was analyzed using t-test and correlation. The correlation analysis showed the significant and positive correlation of the internet addiction with the loneliness of the participants of both the Govt. and Pvt. Schools, whereas, with the academic performance the correlation is significant, but negative in direction. The result of the t-test analysis showed the significant difference between the Govt. and Pvt. Schools on their internet addiction, loneliness and academic performance and further confirms the results in this regard.

KEYWORDS: Internet Addiction, Loneliness and Academic Performance

INTRODUCTION

The internet is the imperative powerful social realm that connects its users around the world and offers the quick access to the Information. It can be used as a source to upsurge one's acquaintance for different drives. Though internet has become an important part of school and college students, yet its judicious use is in question, as the excessive use may put individuals into addiction. Internet addiction has been generally associated with younger generations, particularly with school and college students. It affects them at various levels of academics, interpersonal relationship, physical and health domains, consequent to psychological problems like depression, loneliness, shyness, stress, anxiety and frustration.

Young (2006), stated that the internet is one aspect that influence our daily life in somewhat way. According to the Ministry of Information and Communication (2005), around 94.8% of teenagers are using the internet, which suggests that teenagers may consider the cyberspace as a real rather than virtual space. It means that, internets provide facilities for people, while on the other hand people might abuse the internet usage. Ko et al. (2005) found that internet and computer usage has become popular worldwide, but it also has a negative impact on individuals, communities and society at large. Chebbi, Koong and Liu, (2000) stated, internet addiction is a contemporary problem due to its easy access to online information. In other word, it can be taken as an impulse control or conduct disorder. Furthermore, some of the characteristics of this problem are similar to those of pathological gaming. Orzack and Hecht (1999) found that, people who are easily bored, lonely, shy, depressed and suffering from other addiction are people who are susceptible to internet

addiction. According to Chebbi, Koong and Liu (2000), people who are internet dependent can develop many types of disorder and the common is Internet Addiction Disorder (IDA). Individuals, who suffer from exhibiting symptoms, such as downsides and face implications similar to alcoholics, or other compulsive behaviors,

Nalwa and Anand (2003) studied the extent of internet addiction in school children, and observed that internet dependents do append their work to spend more time online, lost sleep due to late-night sittings on the internet and felt life boring without the internet. The time spent on the internet by its dependents was higher than those of the non-dependants. A survey conducted in the 26 cities by Internet and Mobile Association of India (2005) covering 65,000 persons in 16,500 households, has shown 1.6 million school children use the internet for about 322 minutes a week and about 3.4 million college students use the internet about 433 minutes a week, just highlights the glimpse of the problem and most of the time they have used it for unnecessary uses. This is happening because, it has become coercion for the students to use the Internet and feel comfortable with online friends, rather than the real one (Solomon, 2009). Otherwise, offline situations make them unfulfilled, apprehensive, irritated, restless, miserable and lonely at large.

Douglas et al. (2003) found that loneliness has been observed as one of the main antecedents of Internet Addiction, besides feelings of isolation, low self-confidence, and low self-esteem. Park and Choi, (2011) found that the Internet user do try to solve the problem of their intense loneliness or isolation through its use, and in turn essentially trapped in a new form of addiction, which further encapsulates the problem and maximizes the consequence in terms of mental illness and addiction. Young and Rogers, (1998) also found that the higher use of the internet, the higher the risk of mental illness and loneliness among the children. Barthakur and Sharma (2012) and others conducted a study to examine the effect of social media and the internet on the academic performances of students and observed the negative bearing on the internet on the student's academic performance (Kim, J. H. 2004; Son, 2003; Jeong, 2005; Barber, 1997; Brady, 1996; Young, 1998). Anderson (2001) conducted a study on college students, those who reported higher use of the Internet had a direct positive correlation with decreased academic grades, decreased amount of sleep.

Thus, the excessive internet use may cause decline in study habits and grades, increased risk of absenteeism and poor integration in extracurricular activities. Besides, psychological distress as well as feeling of loneliness and social isolation may be affecting the academic pursuits of the student. Vizesfar, (2006) conducted a study with students and found that the interrelationship of Internet Addiction, depression and academic performance and observed that, the depressed children had more academic problems than the non-depressed. Haycock, McCarthy and Skay (1998), found that, as addiction levels increases, deferral also increases as increase in loss of control, desire of being online more, and having problems in social relationships, consequently increases the academic stalling among students.

Keeping in view the above, the present study is designed to explore the relationship of Internet addiction with the loneliness and academic performance of the students of Shimla city with the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES

- To study the relationship of internet addition with the loneliness.
- To study the relationship of internet addition with the Academic Performance.
- To study the difference between Government and Private school secondary students in terms of their internet addiction loneliness and academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

Design: Correlation design was implied to see the relationship of Internet addiction with the loneliness and academic performance of the participants, and t –test was done to see the difference between the private school and Govt school students on these variables.

Participants: In total 200 secondary school students, 100 each were selected randomly from the 4 Government and 4 private school secondary students, selected randomly out of 8 Governments and 10 private schools, respectively of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

Tool Used: The standardized *Internet Addiction Scale* (Young, 1998) Cronbach alpha value. 91 and Spearman-Brown value. 87 and *Loneliness Scale* (Asher et al. 1984) Cronbach alpha value. 96 and the correlation coefficient. 94 have been used in the present study to observe the internet addiction, and loneliness of the government and private secondary school students. The scores obtained by the participants in the 10th class in their respective board examination were taken in the academic performance of the participants. Further, in order to have the same unit of learning outcome for all the participants of the study, the standard formula was applied to obtain the learning outcome of the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of the present study revealed that the scores of internet addiction of the Govt. Secondary School students are significant and positively correlated with the scores of their loneliness ($r = .509^{**}$ $p < .01$), while with their academic performance ($r = -.543^{**}$ $p < .01$) the 'r' value is significant, but negative in direction (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Correlation Table of the Govt. School Participants

Variables	Internet Addiction	Loneliness	Academic Performance
Internet addiction	1.00	.509**	-.543**
Loneliness		1.00	-.549**
Academic Performance			1.00

Similarly, in case of Private School Secondary students, the scores of internet addiction are also significant and positively correlated with the scores of loneliness ($r = .510^{**}$ $p < .01$) whereas with academic performance ($r = -.517^{**}$ $p < .01$) 'r' is significant and negative (See Table 2).

Table 2: Correlation Table of the Private School Participants

Variables	Internet Addiction	Loneliness	Academic Performance
Internet addiction	1.0	.510**	-.517**
Loneliness		1.0	-.565**
Academic Performance			1.0

Further, the result of the t-test analysis (See Table 3) showed the significant difference between the Government and Private secondary school students on their scores of internet Addiction ($t = 4.781^{**}$ $p < .01$), loneliness ($t = 2.783^{*}$ $p < .05$) and academic performance ($t = 7.530^{**}$ $p < .01$). The mean scores of Private school students on their internet addiction ($M = 59.80/51.53$) and loneliness ($53.42/49.45$) are higher than the mean scores of Govt. School students on their internet addiction and loneliness i.e. higher the internet addiction, higher the loneliness and vice versa. Thus, clearly indicates the

significant and positive relationship of internet addiction and loneliness. Whereas, in case of their academic performance, the mean scores of Pvt School students ($M = 56.53/67.39$) are lower than the Govt. School students with respect to the internet addiction of Govt. and Private school students also confirm the negative relationship between these two variables, i.e. higher the internet addiction lower the academic performance and vice versa.

The results of the present study clearly shows the significant and positive relationship of internet addiction with loneliness, and do find support from the earlier direct and indirect evidence available.

Table 3: t- Test Table

Variables	Participants	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Test
Internet Addiction	Govt. Schools	51.53	9.824	4.781**
	Private Schools	59.80	14.237	
Loneliness	Govt. Schools	49.45	10.614	2.783*
	Private Schools	53.42	9.533	
Academic Performance	Govt. Schools	67.39	11.41	7.530**
	Private Schools	56.53	8.815	

Young et al. (1998) showed that the internet addiction is associated with loneliness, depression, poor self-esteem, shyness, and low life satisfaction. Ceyhan and Ceyhan, (2008) also found a causal relationship between internet addiction and loneliness by isolating individuals from the real world and deprive them of a sense of a connection with real-world contacts. Yang et al. (2007) showed that the individuals who are addicted to the internet are exhausted, bored, and lonely, depressed, suffer from social anxiety and have more social deprivation and seclusion. Sadeqian (2005), found that addiction to the internet is effective in decreasing social skills and in turn increasing loneliness in the secondary school students (Qasem Zadeh et al., 2007). Therefore, the result of the present study confirms the significant and positive relationship of internet addiction with the loneliness of the secondary students, i.e., higher the internet addiction, higher, the loneliness and vice versa.

The results further revealed that internet addiction is negative and significantly correlated with academic performance of both the Government and Private secondary school students. In addition, the result of t-test showed the significant difference between Government and Private school secondary students on the score of internet addiction and as well as on their academic performance. The mean values of internet addiction and academic performance of Government and Private school Secondary students are concerned, the mean values of internet addiction is higher ($M = 59.80/51.53$) in Private School Secondary students than the government school secondary students, whereas the mean values of academic performance ($56.53/67.39$) is higher in government school secondary students than the Private school secondary student, thus further confirms the significant and negative relationship of the internet addiction with the academic performance of the participants.

The results of the present study corroborate the result of the earlier work done in the area. Bitar, Mehdi and Moslem (2011) in their study found significant and negative relationship of internet use of the students with their study habits, grades, presence in the class. Additionally, 43% of the students have faced with failure at school, due to disruptive and delayed sleep because of late night internet use. Kubey et.al. (2001) also found some additional problems caused due to internet addiction i.e. social isolation, late evening use and sleep disturbances, difficulty completing homework assignments, studying for exams, or sleeplessness in turn has also affected school performances. Moreover, Usman and colleagues (2014) and Jiang (2014) have also shown the negative relationship between academic

performance and addiction to internet. Hence, the result of the present study confirms the significant and negative relationship of internet addiction with the academic performance of the secondary school students. i.e., higher the internet addiction, lower the academic performance and vice versa.

The result of the present study indicates that it may be the excessive use of the internet that may be the cause of loneliness and poor academic performance among secondary students however require further investigation.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research was designed to see the relationship of internet addiction with the loneliness and academic performance of secondary school students and the study found that the positive relationship of internet addiction with the loneliness and negative relationship with the academic performance clearly indicate that “higher the internet addiction, higher the loneliness and lower the academic performance” i.e., students who are addicted to internet are likely to have loneliness and poor academic performance and vice versa and require immediate attention and further investigations.

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